

TORONTO CIVILIAN PARK PATROL

by Rombus Hube

Philosopher's Walk is a pleasant car-free pedestrian way between Queen's Park and Bloor St. For three or four weeks this September the safety of its users was guaranteed by the diligent efforts of four types of patrollers; the Toronto regular police, who said that the walk was under their jurisdiction; the Toronto Morality Squad, cleverly disguised as greasers; and me. The reputation of philosopher's walk as a gay lover's lane, ephemeral at the best of times, suffered a decline under the watchful eyes of so many competing forces. Not only did very few people make out there during the month of September, no one got arrested either; and that was the reason for my presence, and hopefully the result of it.

On the last night of August; a Monday; I witnessed, not for the first time, an arrest in philosopher's walk. It didn't look like an arrest. Three young men were standing, joking, on a well lighted ridge when two of them were jumped from behind by two men, dressed casually, who proceeded to grab and punch and throw the startled arrestees down the slope. It didn't look like an arrest, it looked like a mugging; and it must have felt like one from the screams I heard from one of the victims. After a night at police station 52, the two arrested pleaded guilty to gross indecency; a crime for which there was no witness except the guilty fear of the accused and the lies of the police. It wasn't the first time I'd seen such an excuse for justice, but it was the last. I decided that the people who walk there they can be prey to of licensed muggers should be warned.

With the knowledge and assistance of the Community Homophile Association of Toronto, I began patrolling Philosopher's Walk, with a flashlight, from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. every night from the first of September. Rainy nights and weekends, when arrests were unlikely to occur I stayed away, but for more than three weeks, sometimes alone, sometimes with a friend or two, I checked on everything that happened between Bloor and Hoskin. Trinity and the Museum. The first night and a few times afterwards, I ran into members of the regular police. They were checking for drunks mainly, but stopped for long enough to talk about what I was doing. They seemed surprised to find that some gay person, me, would walk around for hours every night with a flashlight trying to prevent other gay people from being hurt. After answering questions about what it was like to be gay ("I get hard when I see a naked man, you get hard when you see a naked woman; the impulse is the same only the object different") they agreed that it didn't make sense to send plain clothes cops lurking about the bushes if you wanted to prevent gay people from using the area for cruising, since the gay people, especially if they were drunk might find one of the police interesting, and be led to make an indecent advance, or else think it was all right to make out with someone else, if it looked like everyone was there for the same purpose. Except for this one long conversation, the regular police were in

close to a hundred hours I patrolled the Walk. So much for police protection.

A majority of the cruisers that I warned in that time were receptive and didn't seem to be aware that they were in any danger from either sporting straights or morality thugs. Most of them were under the illusion that they could only be arrested if they were doing something illegal, and probably remained unconvinced. After the first week or so I stopped using the flashlight, it was turning some of them on; and just went about with C.H.A.T. cards saying "When you're arrested, give us a call; and don't just plead guilty until you've talked to a lawyer." A minority of people still refused to believe that I was doing anything except gratifying my voyeuristic fantasies, but the action declined enough to enable us to keep an eye on the entire situation, and when the ready.

It happened twice. The same two who had been successful before returned on the following Wednesday and again the week after. The first time the Walk was crowded but a friend was with me and we passed out dance flyers and information until no one was left in the area except two cops, two strangers and us. The other hopped the fence and left. I was worried, but there was no arrest on the books the next day. A week later, I was alone patrolling, and the same two were stalking someone in a dark corner, waiting for a second person so that they could make the traditional double arrest. I warned him, and left as fast as I could; after all, I was no stranger to the police this time; and they left empty handed. They were beginning to feel the frustration of not making out on the meat rack, but I don't think it was teaching them compassion. The weather turned bad, and I don't know whether there was a return attempt, but there were no arrests.

Since this little episode there have been meetings between the Director of C.H.A.T. and representatives of the Metro Police. The basic concept that homosexuals are criminals and any attempt to trap and arrest them is justifiable seems to be declining. The situation where gay people were being arrested on the evidence of single implicated police, and found automatically guilty, has almost stopped. But maybe it's just the weather. There is no legal guarantee that the police won't decide to declare open season on homosexuals in the future. There are still plenty of laws around which can be used against us. The only defence against this sort of thing is vigilance and communication. Every gay person who sees anything potentially dangerous for the people involved will have to be responsible for the consequences. And silence is our greatest enemy. Any evidence of police intimidation or failure to respond to the rights of gay citizens for protection must be communicated to other gay people, preferably through the various Homophile organizations. We have both allies and en-

and the legal authorities, this has been amply shown by the events of the past year. Each gay individual who refused to be intimidated increases the chances of others to a fair deal in this society where sexuality is still looked upon as a strange and fearful subject by straight and gay alike. Perhaps when we have liberated both the homosexual and the heterosexuals from their fear and guilt in respect to one another, there won't be any need for Homophile Organizations or Morality Squads. Meanwhile working for human liberation, even if it only means carrying a flashlight on Philosopher's walk, will be necessary.



club integration

A discussion at one of the Gay Woman's meetings resulted in the idea of making a proposal, which would be presented to the owners of all the gay clubs.

This proposal was brought to a C.H.A.T. meeting where it was received well. It was decided to have the proposal signed by members of the Gay Community.

The proposal reads;

To whom it may concern:

We the undersigned feel that it is now time to rid the "Gay Social Scene" of sex or sexual discrimination on the grounds of sex or sexual preference. In the past there have been gestures towards this goal but they have not been adequate.

"A person should have the right to enter any place of entertainment on any night that it is open without restrictions", e.g. paying double or having to be accompanied by another person,

We therefore propose that your club be integrated on either a Friday or Saturday night, to start with.

This proposal will be presented for signatures to the Gay community at the C.H.A.T. meeting on the 26th of October and mailed to all clubs by the 30th of October.

Pat Murphy